

Healthy

Living

Winter 2021

ENJOY MORE

Time Outdoors,
Even in Winter

HOW EXERCISE

Can Help You Live Longer

HOW TO GET FIT

Using Smart Goals

RISKY BEHAVIORS

that Can Lead to
Chronic Disease

BENEFITS OF YOGA

and more...



A Special Supplement to

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What Protein, Carbs, Fat Do for Your Body

A nutritious diet is a vital component of a healthy lifestyle. When paired with physical activity, a nutritious diet can serve as the foundation for a long, healthy life.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics defines nutrition as how food affects the health of the body. Food provides nutrients that are vital for survival. Food is made up of macronutrients like protein, carbohydrates and fat, each of which play different roles in promoting short- and long-term health.

• PROTEIN: Protein provides the body with amino acids that are essential for growth and development. The amino acids found in protein also help the body maintain itself and help body tissue recover after certain activities, including exercise. Protein also plays a vital role in immune system function, helping the body to fight inflammation and infection. The AND notes that beef, pork, chicken, game and wild meats, fish, seafood, eggs, soybeans, and other legumes are great protein sources.

• CARBOHYDRATES: Carbohydrates do for the body what gasoline does for an automobile. Carbs provide the body with the energy it needs to function at peak capacity. The carbs found in foods like whole grains, rice, potatoes, bread, and more deliver sugars and starches that provide the carbs the body needs for energy. That energy is vital when moving around during the day, but it's also essential when the body is at rest, as it ensures the heart continues to beat and facilitates digestion.

• FAT: The dietary fat found in oils, nuts, milk, cheese, and other foods provides structure to cells and prevents damage to cell membranes. The AND also notes that oils and fats absorb fat-soluble vitamins like vitamin A, which is vital for healthy eyes and lungs.

A nutritious diet is a building block of a healthy lifestyle, and no healthy diet is complete without protein, carbohydrates and fat. MCC

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Enjoy More Time Outdoors, *Even When It's Cold!*

The amount of time people spend outdoors has dramatically decreased, as the Environmental Protection Agency now reports the average American spends 87 percent of his or her time in a residence, school building or workplace.

Being outside is linked to better moods, more physical activity and less exposure to contaminants (concentrations of some pollutants are often two to five times higher indoors). Also, people who spend time outside may not come into contact with surface germs or develop various illnesses spread as often as those who spend a lot of time indoors.

Cold weather can make the desire to be outside less appealing, but it is important



for one's mental and physical well-being to get outside. The following activities might coax people outside for some crisp air.

CREATE SNOW CRITTERS

Why do snowmen and women get all of the fanfare this time of year? Just about any living or fictional creature can be molded from snow and embellish landscapes. Use food-grade coloring in spray bottles to add even more creative flair to snow designs.

GO ON A NATURE HIKE

While many plants and animals hibernate in winter, there is still plenty to see. Bring along a sketch book or camera and capture nature in winter. White-washed hills can be beautiful to behold, and many small animals and birds look even more vivid against the white backdrop of snow.

MAKE AN OBSTACLE COURSE

Turn an area of the yard or park into a homemade obstacle course. It's much more difficult, — and a great workout — to try to jump over snow mounds or run down paths when decked out in warm layers. Engage in lighthearted competitions with friends and family members.

BUILD A BONFIRE

Children can set off in different directions to gather up firewood to craft a bonfire with adults in a safe location. S'mores taste equally delicious whether it's warm or cold outside, and in winter they can be accompanied by toasty mugs of cocoa.

GET SPORTY

Sledding, skating, snowshoeing, and ice hockey are just a few of the winter sports that can get the heart pumping and muscles working outside. These activities are entertaining and also great exercise. When venturing outdoors in winter, dress in layers. This way clothing can be put on or taken off to reduce the likelihood of hypothermia. MCC



Common Symptoms of Eating Disorders

Eating disorders are a significant problem across the globe. Studies published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* and in the journal *Current Opinion in Psychiatry* estimate that eating disorders affect at least 9 percent of the population worldwide. Though such numbers are troubling, the National Eating Disorders Association notes that eating disorders are treatable.

Chances for recovery from eating disorders increases the earlier a disorder is detected. That underscores the importance of learning to recognize some of the common symptoms of eating disorders. The NEDA breaks such symptoms down into two categories: emotional/behavioral and physical. While familiarizing oneself with these categories and the symptoms within them is a useful first step toward learning about eating disorders, the NEDA points out that the list should not be mistaken for a checklist. Warning signs vary depending on the disorder, and some symptoms may not fit neatly into either category. In addition, people with eating disorders generally do not have all of these symptoms at once.

EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL

Emotional and behavioral symptoms of eating disorders are generally behaviors and attitudes that indicate that weight loss, dieting and control of food are becoming primary concerns. Such behaviors and attitudes may include:

- A preoccupation with weight, food, calories, carbohydrates, fat grams, and dieting
- Refusal to eat certain foods: A refusal to eat certain foods may progress to restrictions against whole categories of foods, such as carbohydrates.
- Appears uncomfortable eating around others
- Adherence to certain food rituals: For example, someone with an eating disorder may eat only a particular food or food group, including condiments, or chew excessively. Others may not allow foods to touch.
- Skipping meals or taking small portions of food at regular meals
- Adherence to new practices with food or fad diets, including

- cutting out entire food groups (no sugar, no carbs, no dairy, vegetarianism/veganism)
- Withdrawal from usual friends and activities
- Frequent dieting
- Extreme concern with body size and shape
- Frequent checking in the mirror for perceived flaws in appearance
- Extreme mood swings

PHYSICAL

Some physical symptoms of eating disorders may be hard for loved ones to recognize. For example, NEDA notes fluctuations in weight, both up and down, are a physical symptom of eating disorders. However, someone with an eating disorder may begin wearing clothing to cover up such fluctuations. That's why it's so important that loved ones, such as parents and siblings, learn to recognize the other physical symptoms of eating disorders, some of which may be subtle.

- Stomach cramps or other non-specific gastrointestinal complaints: For example, someone with an eating disorder may complain about being constipated or indicate they're experiencing acid reflux.
- Menstrual irregularities: Adolescents and women may miss periods or only have a period while on hormonal contraceptives (the NEDA notes this is not considered a "true" period).
- Difficulties concentrating
- Abnormal laboratory findings: Blood tests during doctor's appointments may reveal anemia, low thyroid and hormone levels, low potassium, or low white and red blood cell counts.
- Dizziness, especially upon standing
- Fainting spells or syncope, a condition marked by a temporary loss of consciousness caused by a fall in blood pressure.
- Feeling cold all the time
- Sleep problems
- Cuts and calluses across the top of finger joints: These cuts and calluses suggest a person is inducing vomiting, a behavior associated with the eating disorder bulimia.
- Dental problems, such as enamel erosion, cavities, and tooth sensitivity
- Dry skin and hair, and brittle nails
- Swelling around area of salivary glands
- Fine hair on body
- Cavities, or discoloration of teeth, typically resulting from vomiting
- Muscle weakness
- Yellow skin (in context of eating large amounts of carrots)
- Cold, mottled hands and feet or swelling of feet
- Wounds that heal poorly
- Impaired immune functioning

Eating disorders affect people from all walks of life. Learning to recognize the symptoms of eating disorders can be an important first step toward seeking treatment for yourself or a loved one. MCC

How Exercise Can Help You Live Longer



There are many reasons to get in shape. Weight loss is a prime motivator, as is reversing a negative health effect, such as high cholesterol or increased diabetes risk. Routine exercise also can improve life expectancy.

WebMD says exercise keeps the body and brain healthy. That's why exercise should be an

important component of daily life no matter one's age.

Research published in the journal *Immune Aging* found that how people age is 75 percent lifestyle and only 25 percent genetics, which underscores the importance of the lifestyle choices people make.

CARDIORESPIRATORY FITNESS

Many health experts say that cardiorespiratory fitness may be just as valuable a metric to determine overall health as blood pressure and lipid levels. People with a high aerobic capacity can deliver oxygen to tissues and cells efficiently to fuel exercise, according to data published in 2014 in the journal *Aging & Disease*. In a study involving 11,335 women, researchers compared V02 max, also known as aerobic capacity, in women with mortality data. Women who were fit from a cardiovascular perspective had a lower death rate from all causes, irrespective of the women's weight.

MANAGE STRESS AND MOOD

Exercise has direct stress-busting benefits that can promote longevity. The Mayo Clinic says physical activity can increase the production of endorphins, which are the body's feel-good neurotransmitters. In addition, exercise can imitate the effects of stress, helping the body adjust its flight or fight response accordingly, and help them cope with mildly stressful situations. While engaged in exercise, people may forget about their problems as they are focused on the activity at hand.

IMPROVE BONE HEALTH

Strength training and physical activity can

stave off the effects of frailty and osteoporosis, which affects bone strength. A study published in the *Journal of Internal Medicine* in 2017 found that hip fractures are associated with diminished quality of life and survival among the elderly. One in three adults aged 50 and over dies within 12 months of suffering a hip fracture, and older adults have a five- to eight-times greater risk of dying within three months following a hip fracture. Building muscle strength, balance and bone density through exercise can reduce falls and frailty, helping to prevent fracture-related health risks.

ADDRESSES SARCOPENIA

The health and wellness resource Healthline defines sarcopenia as the loss of muscle mass specifically related to aging. Doctors once considered this muscle loss inevitable, and it can affect stamina and lead to weakness. However, new indications suggest that exercise is the main treatment regimen for sarcopenia, particularly resistance training. This is designed to improve muscle strength and help balance hormone levels by turning protein into energy for older adults.

These are just some of the ways exercise can help older adults live longer, healthier lives. MCC

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How to Get Fit Using SMART Goals

By Kristin Clickett

Special to The Mount Airy News

Staying active as we age is vital to maintaining optimal health. But for many Americans, exercise is often put on the back burner. The reality is, we simply feel overwhelmed when making lifestyle changes and lack the mindset and support needed to successfully implement a plan.

Meet Ann, a grandmother of five. Ann was feeling out of shape and finding it difficult to keep up with her grandchildren. Ann has been working with an Integrative Health Coach to establish a fitness routine. Ann's coach asked her to describe what an active, healthy life looked like. Ann smiled as she envisioned her family hiking in the mountains on a beautiful nature trail. That vision was the carrot Ann needed to begin her journey and reach her wellness goal.

Ann began pondering ways to restore and strengthen her body. The path became clear when she was prompted by her coach to explore her past successes with regular exercise. Immediately Ann knew the answer; she would reestablish a regular walking routine with friends.

Ann's coach applauded this revelation and encouraged her to create a SMART goal in order to achieve success. A SMART goal is something Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. Ann successfully recruited two friends and together they created a SMART goal.

The group agreed to meet Monday through Friday at 7:00 AM and walk for 30 minutes throughout their neighborhood. They decided to be realistic and start with 15 minutes the first week



and reassess thereafter. Each would wear a pedometer and track their number of steps by keeping a daily log. If one felt like not showing up, they would call one another for support.

The SMART goal that Ann and her friends created helped ensure success and ultimately improved the health and happiness of all participants. The added value of sharing her journey with others made it that much sweeter. It's been almost three months

now and Ann is well on her way to bringing her vision to life. She and her grandchildren eagerly anticipate their next hiking adventure together.

Clickett is a CRNA, MSN, NBCHWC, an Advanced Practice Nurse and Integrative Health and Wellness Coach trained by Duke Integrative Medicine. You can reach her at : 336-429-0874 or kristin@kristinlickett.com.



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A nutritious diet is a vital component of a healthy lifestyle. When it's part of a health regimen that includes routine exercise, a healthy diet that's rich in fruits and vegetables can help people reduce their risk for various illnesses, including chronic diseases like heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

Many adults have known about the value of fruits and vegetables since they were youngsters and their parents repeatedly told them how important it was to eat healthy foods. Despite those early lessons, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that less than 10 percent of adults and adolescents eat enough fruits and vegetables. That's unfortunate, as fruits and vegetables are loaded with vitamins that benefit the body in myriad ways.

The U.S. National Library of Medicine notes that vitamin deficiency occurs when people do not get enough of certain vitamins. Recognizing the many functions vitamins serve may compel adults and adolescents to include more fruits and vegetables in their diets.

• **VITAMIN A:** The USNLM notes that vitamin A helps form and maintain healthy teeth, bones, soft tissue, mucous membranes, and skin. According to the World Health Organization, vitamin A deficiency is the leading cause of

The Role Different Vitamins Play



preventable blindness in children and increases the risk of disease and death from severe infections.

• **VITAMIN B6:** Vitamin B6 helps form red blood cells and maintain brain function. Though the National Institutes of Health notes that isolated vitamin B6 deficiency is uncommon, a deficiency has been associated with various conditions, including a weakened immune system and dermatitis cheilitis, a condition marked by scaling on the lips and

cracks at the corners of the mouth.

• **VITAMIN C:** Vitamin C is an antioxidant that promotes healthy teeth and gums, helps the body absorb iron and maintains healthy tissue. In addition, vitamin C plays an integral role in helping wounds heal. Vitamin C deficiency impairs bone function, and Merck notes that in children that impairment can cause bone lesions and contribute to poor bone growth.

• **VITAMIN D:** The USNLM notes that 10 to 15 minutes of sunshine three times per week

is enough to produce the body's vitamin D requirement for people at most latitudes. It's hard to rely on food to supply ample vitamin D, which helps the body absorb calcium that is necessary for the development and maintenance of healthy teeth and bones.

• **VITAMIN E:** Vitamin E helps the body form red blood cells and utilize vitamin K. Green, leafy vegetables like spinach and broccoli are good sources of vitamin E. The Office of Dietary Supplements notes that a vitamin E deficiency can cause nerve and muscle damage, potentially leading to muscle weakness and vision problems.

• **VITAMIN K:** Vitamin K helps to make certain proteins that are needed for blood clotting and the building of bones. The T.H. Chan School of Public Health at Harvard notes that the main type of vitamin K is found in green leafy vegetables like collard greens, kale and spinach. Vitamin K deficiency is rare, but it can lead to bleeding, hemorrhaging or osteoporosis.

Vitamins are crucial to human beings' overall health. Eating ample amounts of fruits and vegetables is a great and delicious way to avoid vitamin deficiency. MCC



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The Importance of Rest

Regular exercise has been linked to a host of health benefits. People who exercise regularly can lower their risk for chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes, and routine exercise can improve mood

and potentially delay the onset of cognitive decline.

As vital as physical activity is to a healthy lifestyle, there is such a thing as too much exercise. According to the U.S. National

Library of Medicine, rest is an important part of training. Without ample rest, the body does not have time to recover before the next workout. That lack of rest not only adversely affects performance, but also increases a person's risk for health problems, including injuries that can sideline athletes for lengthy periods of time.

Committed athletes may have a hard time recognizing when they are pushing themselves too hard, and the line between perseverance and overdoing it can be thin. Many athletes credit their ability to push themselves mentally and physically with helping them achieve their fitness goals and thrive as competitors. But it's vital that athletes learn to recognize the signs that suggest they're exercising too much. The USNLM notes that the following are some signs of overdoing it with an exercise routine.

- An inability to perform at your established level
- Requiring longer periods of rest between workout sessions
- Feeling tired
- Feeling depressed

- Experiencing mood swings or irritability
- Difficulty sleeping
- Feeling sore muscles or heavy limbs
- Suffering overuse injuries such as runner's knee, achilles tendinitis, shin splints, and plantar fasciitis
- Loss of motivation
- Getting more colds
- Unintended weight loss
- Feelings of anxiety

The USNLM urges anyone experiencing these symptoms to rest completely for between one and two weeks. After that period of rest, the body should be fully recovered. However, if any of these issues linger after two weeks, seek the advice of a health care provider. A health care provider may recommend additional rest and/or conduct a series of tests to determine if an underlying issue is causing any of the aforementioned symptoms.

Rest is as vital to an effective exercise regimen as proper technique, ensuring the body has ample time to recover and reducing the risk of overuse injuries. MCC

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Prepare for a *Sledding Adventure*

Dashing through the snow in a one- horse open sleigh...

Winter holidays are made all the more merry with the addition of some outdoor recreation. Sleights and sleds are par for the Christmas course, especially when a bounty of snow is in the forecast.

Sledding has been part of snowy celebrations for ages. Sledding is a fun-filled activity, but it can be made an even better time, and a little safer, if revelers learn a little more about it.

SLED STYLES

Sleds come in many different styles, each with its own advantages. Sleds with metal blades will work like ice skates, balancing riders' weight on two metal runners. These sleds can work well during icy conditions or with hard-packed snow. Toboggans can fit multiple people, which can increase the fun factor and downhill speeds. Saucer-style sleds are good for one or two people. Foam liners on some saucers can absorb shock for riders,

making those downhill bumps a little easier on the backside. Keep in mind that sleds with steering mechanisms are easier to control, which can equate to safer sledding.

LAYER UP

It is best to dress in layers when going sledding. Even if it seems warm at home, it may be colder and windier at the top of hills. Sweating when it's cold out can increase a person's risk for hypothermia. According to experts at Timberline Trails, a person who works up a sweat and comes in contact with ambient air when taking a break will feel an immediate chill. This is called evaporative danger, and can be remedied by dressing in layers and trying to stay dry.

INVEST IN A HELMET

Sledding requires the use of a helmet. At high speeds, a blow to the head can cause a concussion or worse.

LET OTHERS GO FIRST

Wait until some sledders have already gone downhill, allowing them to compact the snow, which should make for a smooth ride.

Choose safe hills, such as those that

are free of bare spots, holes, trees, and obstructions, and do not end abruptly at a road. Hills with a long, flat area at the end make for easy, safe stopping.

SAFETY FIRST

Put safety first when sledding. Sled during the daytime so visibility is better. Keep arms and legs on the sled, and only sled feet-first, advises the National Safety Council.

By keeping these guidelines in mind, sledders can make sure this popular winter activity is as safe as it is fun. MCC





Risky Behaviors that Can Lead to Chronic Disease

Chronic diseases pose a significant threat to the general public. It can be easy for adults in the prime of their lives to overlook the danger of chronic diseases, especially if they feel good and aren't exhibiting any symptoms to suggest their health is in jeopardy. But overlooking the potential dangers of chronic disease can prove deadly.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that chronic diseases like heart disease, cancer and diabetes are the leading causes of death and disability in the United States. Chronic diseases are costly as well, as recent reports from the Rand Corp. and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services indicate that 90 percent of annual health care expenditures in the United States are for people with chronic and mental health conditions.

While there's no way to guarantee a person won't develop a chronic disease, avoiding certain risky behaviors can help adults greatly reduce their risk for various chronic diseases.

TOBACCO USE

The CDC notes that tobacco is the leading cause of preventable disease, and not just

among smokers. While 34 million adults in the United States smoke cigarettes, 58 million nonsmokers, including children, are exposed to secondhand smoke, which can cause chronic diseases like stroke, lung cancer and coronary heart disease. Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at increased risk of impaired lung function, acute respiratory infections, middle ear disease, and more frequent and severe asthma attacks.

POOR NUTRITION

The value of fruits and vegetables is well-documented. In spite of that, the CDC reports that fewer than 10 percent of adults and adolescents eat enough fruits and vegetables. In addition, the CDC reports that 60 percent of young people between the ages of two and 19 and half of all adults consume a sugary drink on any given day. Such beverages, as well as processed foods, add unnecessary sodium, saturated fats and sugar to people's diets, increasing their risk for chronic disease as a result.

LACK OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The Department of Health and Human Services has issued physical activity guidelines designed to help people improve their overall health and reduce their risk for various diseases. But the CDC reports that just 25 percent of adults and 20 percent of adolescents meet the recommended physical activity guidelines. Low levels of physical activity can contribute to heart disease, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancer, and obesity.

EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

The CDC notes that excessive alcohol consumption can cause heart disease, irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, and stroke. In addition, the CDC reports that the less alcohol a person drinks, the lower his or her risk of cancer becomes.

Chronic diseases are a formidable opponent. But people of all ages can reduce their chances of developing such diseases by avoiding a handful of risky behaviors. MCC



The Various Health Benefits of Yoga



Health-conscious individuals can do many things to improve their overall health. As medical researchers continue to uncover new things about how to achieve optimal health, one practice dating back to ancient times remains a highly effective way to take care of the human body.

Though there's no written records regarding the origins and invention of yoga, the practice is believed to date back to ancient India. The earliest written record of yoga is "The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali," a collection of aphorisms that historians believe was compiled sometime between 500 BCE and 400 BCE.

Despite its age, yoga has not been studied extensively by medical researchers. According to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, many studies looking into the health effects of yoga have included only small numbers of people and have not been of high quality. As a result, the NCCIH can only say that yoga shows promise in regard to helping people manage or overcome certain health issues, but not that it has been proven to do so.

Though yoga may need to be studied more closely and extensively, many people who include it in their regular health care routines report feeling better both physically and mentally for having

done so, and that may not be a coincidence. A 2004 comprehensive review of yoga's use as a therapeutic intervention published in the Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology indicated that yoga targets unmanaged stress, which has been linked to chronic disorders like anxiety, depression, obesity, diabetes, and insomnia.

In addition to that review, the NCCIH notes that research has suggested yoga can:

- Relieve low-back pain and neck pain
- Relieve menopause symptoms
- Help people manage anxiety or depressive symptoms associated with difficult life situations
- Help people quit smoking
- Help people who are overweight or obese lose weight
- Help people with chronic diseases manage their symptoms and improve their quality of life.

It's important that anyone considering making yoga part of their health care routines recognize that there are various forms of yoga, some of which are more physically demanding than others. So it's best if individuals speak with their physicians before trying yoga so they can find the type that aligns best with their current levels of fitness. MCC

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Physical Activity Guidelines for Children, Adolescents and Adults



Staying healthy is a full-time job for people of all ages. While it might not always prove so easy to exercise or eat right, the benefits of healthy living are undeniable.

According to the Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease, “prevention” refers to helping people avoid getting sick or identifying diseases early so treatment can begin. Immunizations and disease screenings are two vital components of preventive care, but children, adolescents and adults can take more active roles in preventive care by embracing physical activity.

The Department of Health and Human Services notes that physical activity fosters normal growth and development and can help people feel better, function better, sleep better,

and reduce their risk for a large number of chronic diseases. Reducing risk for chronic disease keeps people out of the doctor’s office, or even the hospital, and it also can help save considerable amounts of money. One report from the The Milken Institute estimated that high chronic disease and obesity rates are responsible for more than \$1 trillion in lost productivity in the workplace every year. In addition, the National Commission on Prevention Priorities notes that increasing the use of five preventive services to 90 percent can save more than 100,000 lives in the United States each year. Such services include advising smokers to quit and offering medication or other assistance to help them and providing flu

shots for people age 65 and older.

In recognition of the role exercise plays in preventive care, the DHHS recommends children, adolescents and adults follow these physical activity guidelines.

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

The DHHS recommends that children and adolescents between the ages of six and 17 should get 60 minutes or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity every day.

- **Aerobic:** Most of the 60 minutes or more per day should be either moderate- or vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity and should include vigorous-intensity physical activity at least three days a week.

- **Muscle-strengthening:** As part of their 60 minutes or more of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include muscle-strengthening physical activity at least three days a week.
- **Bone-strengthening:** As part of their 60 minutes or more of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include bone-strengthening physical activity at least three days a week.

Parents can consult with their children’s physicians to determine age-appropriate muscle- and bone-strengthening activities for their youngsters.

ADULTS

The DHHS advises adults to make a concerted effort to move more and sit less throughout the day. Some physical activity is better than none. Adults who sit less and do any amount of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity gain some health benefits.

For substantial health benefits, adults should get at least 150 minutes to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes to 150 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity each week. An equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity can serve as a substitute. Ideally, aerobic activity should be spread throughout the week.

Adults should do muscle-strengthening activities of moderate or greater intensity that involve all major muscle groups two or more days a week, as the DHHS notes these activities provide additional health benefits.

These guidelines also apply to older adults, but older adults also should incorporate balance training into their exercise routines. In addition, the DHHS urges older adults to consult with their physicians about the appropriate level of effort for physical activity relative to their level of fitness.

People of all ages should include physical activity in their preventive health care routines. More information about exercise is available at www.health.gov. MCC

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Learning More about an Interactive Fitness Mirror



Home gyms have long been a coveted addition for fitness enthusiasts. Many homeowners do not have the space to install the assortment of equipment that makes for a great workout. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many people looked to transform spaces in their homes and sought innovative ways to exercise at home.

Digital smart mirrors, sometimes referred to as interactive fitness displays, are among the latest technology to hit the home fitness market. These mirrors are fully functioning exercise studios right in the comfort of home, but unlike other pieces of workout equipment, fitness mirrors look just like a regular mirror when they're not engaged. That means they can hang in any room without distracting from the decor.

HOW DO THEY WORK?

The equipment works differently depending on the chosen product. Units can range in price from \$1,500 to \$2,000, and a subscription to a fitness account is necessary. This provides access to either recorded or live-streamed fitness trainers. These trainers are often certified individuals from the country's top studios. The trainers will have access to information subscribers enter and will be able to provide motivation and live feedback based on fitness metrics — as well as what they see live.

In addition to the instructors, some mirrors come with expertly curated playlists that complement specific workouts.

OTHER FEATURES AND TECHNOLOGY

Depending on the unit, the fitness mirror may sync with a Bluetooth-enabled fitness watch or tracker to provide real time heart rate and other measurable data. Keep in mind that the mirrors use integrative cameras to provide feedback on performance. Some may rely on advanced motion-capture technology to protect privacy more effectively.

In addition to the interactive mirror, other smart fitness systems have gear built right into the devices. This can include electromagnetic weights to deliver resistance when “smart” handles or a bar are connected to the wall-mounted machine. The brand Tonal also has a spotter mode, to assist with heavy lifting. Other tech-driven fitness equipment includes interactive treadmills and stationary bikes from manufacturers like Peloton.

Streamlined, tech-heavy fitness devices are revolutionizing home gyms. With some up-front investment, these devices may pay for themselves with improved health and reduced reliance on potentially costly club memberships. MCC



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Fresh Herbs Can Reduce Your Reliance on Sodium

Salt has long been used to add flavor to people's favorite foods. In fact, the use of salt as a means to preserving foods and adding flavor to recipes dates back to ancient times and has led to countless conflicts ever since.

According to History.com, wars over access to salt reserves in China are believed to have been fought as early as 6,000 B.C. Though that shows just how valuable salt has been throughout much of human history, it doesn't indicate the negative effects that can result from diets that feature excessive amounts of sodium.

The American Heart Association notes that sodium plays an essential role in the human body by regulating the kidneys and helping to control the body's fluid balance. Sodium also helps send

nerve impulses and affects muscle function. However, excessive amounts of sodium can compromise heart health. The AHA notes that excessive amounts of sodium in the bloodstream pulls water into the blood vessels, increasing the total volume of blood within them. As more blood flows through blood vessels, blood pressure increases. Over time, that can adversely affect blood vessels and speed up the build-up of plaque that can block blood flow. Higher blood pressure forces the heart to work harder and increases a person's risk for heart disease.

So what about sodium, a mineral so valued, and indeed vital to human existence, that it's led to wars and created countless devotees in kitchens over the centuries? If it's flavor cooks are aiming

for, it's possible to reduce reliance on sodium and increase the use of fresh herbs without sacrificing flavor. Such a transition can improve heart health and introduce a host of new flavors at meal time.

BASIL

The AHA notes that basil has a sweet and fresh flavor profile and is best added to a dish right before serving. Freshly cut basil leaves can be added to any number of dishes, including tomato sauces, pastas, salads, pizzas, and eggs.



CILANTRO

Cilantro are the delicate leaves and stems of the coriander plant. Like basil, cilantro should be added to a dish right before serving and should not be cooked. Cilantro can be paired with beans, tomatoes, corn, and avocados among other foods, and is widely used when preparing Mexican foods at home.



OREGANO

The AHA notes that Greek dishes often combine oregano, mint and lemon to create a memorable, delicious flavor profile. If chopping fresh oregano, strip the leaves from the stem and then discard the stem.



PARSLEY

Parsley isn't just a garnish used to add aesthetic appeal to plates. Flat-leaf parsley provides a light and fresh flavor, while the AHA notes that curly parsley offers a slightly peppery profile. Parsley is typically added to a dish during the final minutes of cooking or right before serving, and can be paired with chicken, fish, potatoes, and pasta among countless other foods.



These are just a handful of herbs that can give meals a flavorful punch and help chefs avoid an overreliance sodium in their recipes. MCC

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